

READ for Parents

21 August 2024

Accommodations at the Secondary Level

Speakers: Elaine Miskinis, Hayden Miskinis, Kaya Miskinis

Learning Outcomes:

- Can high school students get accommodations in honors courses?
- Can high school students get accommodations for standardized testing (PSATs, SATs etc) and if so, how does that work?
- At the high school level is it the student's responsibility to self-advocate and if so, what is the role of the parent?
- Should high school students move away from accommodations in preparation for college?
- Do accommodations follow a student to college?
- These questions and more will be addressed as we look at the nature of accommodations at the high school level and the role that accommodations play during the transition toward college.

Resources

- [IDA Fact Sheets](#)
- [Reading Rockets Accommodations for Students with LD](#)
- [Learning Disabilities Association of America Accommodations](#)
- [Hayden's Published Essay in the New York Times: Switching Letters, Skipping Lines, Troubled and Dyslexic Minds](#)
- [Types of Accommodations in College](#) ~ Understood.org
- [IDA Fact Sheet At-Risk Students and the Study of Foreign Language in School](#)
- [Yale University. Stories from Students with Dyslexia](#) re: ASLOne Dyslexic's Experience with Learning American Sign Language
- [Wrightslaw information about Twice Exceptional Students](#)
- [Wrightslaw forum on Accommodations in AP and Honors Classes](#)
- [Rights and Responsibilities of College Students with Learning Disabilities \(LD\) from Learning Disabilities Association of America](#)

Questions:

- Advanced courses, such as AP Physics, English, History, et al. Dual enrollment? Can a student receive accommodations?
 - Yes, your accommodations should be given regardless of which class or advanced class you are in.
 - AP exams- if student qualifies for extra time on the College Board for PSAT's or SAT's, then they qualify for that accommodation for AP exams
- Do I have the right to ask for push-in/inclusion support in these higher level courses?(ex.- co-taught with a special education teacher)

- Whatever accommodation the student needs to be supported.
- If the student needs this level of support, then
- What occurs if accommodations are offered but not followed?
 - Challenge- try to let the student take the first step, rather than jumping in as the parent
 - Parents- A good case manager that the student feels comfortable with. Using this person as a resource to help the student navigate and using the case manager as a go-between with the teacher to follow the IEP/504 document.
 - Students-
 - take a deep breath, calm down before talking to your teacher about your accommodations not being followed. Don't let them silence you, explain **why** you need this and the logistics behind it, bring in the research to help prove why.
 - In high school, it's important for you to voice your own opinions and needs. Remind yourself that you are capable of being in these classes, you are smart enough and you have many strengths and abilities.
- At what point should 504s become IEPs for high achieving students?
- What accommodations and documentation are appropriate as students begin thinking about the college search and admission process?
 - Updated evaluations are necessary (completed junior or senior year)
 - Extra time, separate location, etc.
 - Some colleges have these built in for all students, some colleges have a separate paid program to apply these, some the student has to use student services to access.
- Universal Design for Learning. How has it impacted students, accommodations, or curriculum?
- What SEL supports are put into place to aid students with dyslexia who are taking honors classes?
- Did you get your IEP accommodations in dual credit or AP classes in HS?
 - Yes.
- How important is self-advocacy from the student's perspective? At what point does a family need to become more/less involved?
 - Having a case manager and a go-to person to discuss experiences in a classroom to help find a way to help make a difference is very beneficial.
 - They can be an extra/supportive voice in meetings
 - Help prep you prior to meetings, ask what you need

- Technology (speech to text, text to speech, etc.) what specific Apps or tools were the most helpful for you?
 - Grammarly extension (Spelling & Grammar)
 - Audible (for audiobooks)
 - Spotify premium also has audiobooks
 -
- In terms of accessibility, was it difficult to use the technology in classes or in front of your peers? How did you navigate this?
- What do you want middle school, high school, and college level professors to know?
 - Having schools give their teachers resources to teach them about different learning disabilities is powerful. Have students do presentations on these topics to inform teachers on how they impact students.
 - Have teachers familiarize themselves and be willing to understand these common learning disabilities.
 - Remind teachers that even with dyslexia, the students are smart and capable. Sometimes it's hard, but if they're willing to put in the work then they can accomplish it.

Suggestions:

Foreign Language Requirement- Option to take American Sign Language

Helpful Accommodations:

- Eliminate word scramble tasks
- Do not take points off for spelling.
- Extra/Extended time (to decode/break down words, complete assignments and assessments)

Advocacy. Why not just make it easier for yourself? Most students are not looking for the easy way out. Nothing is easy. It's all difficult, so why not reach for what you want?! Be in classes that challenge them. "I want to be in dual enrollment classes with the peers that I connect with and to. The focus that comes with being in an environment conducive to learning~"

Specific Accommodations:

Honors Level Classes Accommodations

- Self-advocacy and open communication between school and student
- Help the teacher/instructor/professor to understand the purpose of the accommodations and the meaning behind the accommodations
- Extra time
- Digital copy of the material is very useful
- When writing material, accommodation to write on computer to use the spell check app (aids for spelling)
- Copy of each of the text going to read (audible, libby, and audio books)

- Reduces the number of hours needed to read the book and an think about the text
- Digital or audio book

Math (Honors)-

- Calculator for all problems- even basic math facts
 - Helps to eliminate smaller number reversals
- Look at whole problem and identify/ breakdown where the error was
- Extra time to compute
- Teacher assistance with word problems and identifying the important/necessary information- what the problem is asking to do

English (Honors & AP)-

- Digital copy or handwritten copy (personal preference)
- Digital copies allow one to zoom in on the text
- When there was a requirement for items written out on paper, accommodation to allow for typed documents for use of a spellchecker
- Copy of each text on Audible, Libby, or other audiobook
 - Allows for rereading

Self-Advocacy

- Help the team or teachers understand and value where the real learning is coming from.
 - Ex- Audiobooks aren't "real" reading- however the concept being focused on is figurative language- not whether they analyze it through audio format or visual reading
- Bring the research when it comes to audiobooks vs. reading a physical book.

Next Steps for transitioning from high school to college:

- Updated evaluations (in junior or senior year)
- Understanding the accommodations don't follow you to college
- Look into what accommodations the schools provide
 - What is the accommodation that all students get at the school? (Offered to everyone)
 - What accommodations do you need to seek out on your own to receive?
 - What colleges have programs offered with an additional fee to receive extra support or accommodations
 - Foreign Language waivers in college- are they offered at the school?
- In the interview and application process, know the specific accommodations that help you and ask if they are offered at that school/how to access them

Comments From Attendees:

Thank you for hosting this presentation.

You young ladies were so articulate with what you shared. I appreciated your stories of advocacy of persistence.

Elaine, thank you for your expertise and thoroughness as a teacher and parent of children with learning differences. It was helpful for my mama and teacher's heart to listen to this information which was relatable for my son who is starting 8th grade this year.

It's great hearing the student perspective! Thank you!